

Message Text

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ACTION PA-02

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UNCLAS BANGKOK 16140

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, TH

SUBJ: ROUNDUP OF BANGKOK MEDIA COVERAGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MATTERS

REF : STATE 165061

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY'S PARTY

USIA WASHDC FOR IEA, IOP, IOR/RIM, IBS, IPS

1. FOLLOWING IS ROUNDUP OF BANGKOK MEDIA COVERAGE OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS MATTERS AS REQUESTED PARA 4 OF REFTEL.

2. THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER CLASH - PRESS CONTINUES TO
GIVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO JULY 21 BORDER CLASH DURING
WHICH 17 THAI WERE KILLED AND 18 WOUNDED. FEATURED ARE
REPORTS FROM ARANYAPRATHET (BORDER TOWN NEAR SITE OF CLASH)
THAT FIGHTING BROKE OFF AFTERNOON OF JULY 21, BUT THAI
CONTINUE AERIAL STRAFING OF SUSPECTED KHMER POSITIONS INSIDE
THAI BORDER. FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT ANNOUNCED THAT HE
WILL SEND PROTEST NOTE TO CAMBODIANS THROUGH KHMER LIAISON
OFFICE IN POIPET (TOWN LOCATED IMMEDIATELY ACROSS BORDER
FROM ARANYAPRATHET). BANGKOK POST EDITORIAL OF JULY 23
CONGRATULATES THAI GOVT ON RESTRAINT IT HAS SHOWN BY NOT
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RETALIATING ACROSS BORDER, QUESTIONS WHETHER KHMER
TROOPS WERE ACTING ON THEIR OWN OR UNDER INSTRUCTIONS
FROM PHNOM PENH, AND CAUTIONS CAMBODIA TO REMAIN
FRIENDLY WITH THAILAND IF THEY WISH TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL
SOVEREIGNTY IN FACE OF IMPERIALIST DESIGNS OF A HOSTILE
VIETNAM. THAI-LANGUAGE THAI RATH, THAILAND'S LARGEST-
CIRCULATION NEWSPAPER, EDITORIALY WELCOMED THAT RTG'S

RETALIATORY COUNTER ATTACK AND HOPED THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS WOULD NEGOTIATE THEIR DIFFERENCES SOON, "IF CAMBODIA IS SINCERE IN LIVING PEACEFULLY WITH US, THAT IS," EDIT SAID AND URGED THAT THAILAND KEEP ITS POWDER DRY AND BEEF UP BORDER DEFENSES.

3. ELECTIONS IN SRI LANKA - WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OF JAYEWARDENE VICTORY IN SRI LANKA ELECTIONS WERE GIVEN PROMINENCE IN JULY 23 THAI, CHINESE AND ENGLISH PRESS. NATION REVIEW EDITORIAL NOTES DEMISE OF WOMEN FROM POSITIONS AS HEADS OF GOVT AND SAYS JAYAWARDENE FACES HERCULEAN TASK CLEANING UP A NATION WHICH THE EDITORIAL CALLS "A TOTAL ECONOMIC MESS."

4. TENG REHABILITATION - REHABILITATION OF PRC'S TENG HSIAO-PING HAS RECEIVED FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE IN ALL MAJOR PAPERS WITH STORIES BASED ON WIRE SERVICE REPORTS. STORIES NOTE THAT TENG HAS BEEN RESTORED TO FORMER SENIOR POSTS AND "GANG OF FOUR" EXPELLED FROM COMMUNIST PARTY.

5. THAI-MALAYSIA BORDER OPERATION - REPORTS OF JOINT THAI-MALAYSIAN BORDER OPERATIONS "SACRED RAY" I AND II PRESENTLY TAKING PLACE AGAINST COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAY INSURGENTS IN SOUTH THAILAND CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PROMINENT COVERAGE. JULY 23 PRESS REPORTS THAT MALAYSIA WILL SEND ADDITIONAL TROOPS INTO THE BETONG SALIENT AS UNCLASSIFIED

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OPERATIONS ENTER FINAL PHASE. OPERATIONS HAVE CONCENTRATED ON DESTROYING COMMUNIST BASE CAMP AREAS AND DISRUPTING SUPPLY LINES.

6. U.S. AID TO VIETNAM - ENGLISH AND CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRESS JULY 23 CARRIED WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH IN MISSISSIPPI SAYING HE WANTS IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM BUT OPPOSES PAYING REPARATIONS. PRESS ALSO REPORTED HOUSE PASSAGE OF TWO ASSISTANCE BILLS WHICH INCLUDE PROHIBITIONS AGAINST AID TO VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA.

7. WIRE SERVICE REPORTS ON PRESIDENT CARTER' STATEMENTS ABOUT NOT BACKING DOWN FROM HIS HUMAN RIGHTS STAND WERE CARRIED IN TWO CHINESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS, INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENT HSING HSIAO JIT PAO, THAILAND'S LARGEST-CIRCULATION CHINESE NEWSPAPER. WHITEHOUSE

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